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FM AMEMBASSY VILNIUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2422
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 0021
RUEHKU/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY 0033
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 0009
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000475

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA IN AFGHANISTAN: WHERE THEY ARE NOW

REF: A. VILNIUS 421

[1](#)B. VILNIUS 272

Classified By: Ambassador John A. Cloud for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The GOL secured conditional funding from UAE and Saudi officials for reconstruction projects in Ghor province in a meeting facilitated and attended by USAID Administrator Fore on the margins of the June 12 Paris Conference. MFA U/S Talat-Kelpsa intends to combine a trip to Ghor in the wake of the May 22 death of a Lithuanian soldier (ref A) with an additional leg in Kabul to discuss Gulf State/Korean funding conditions with the Afghan Minister of Finance. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Lithuanian FM Vaitiekunas secured conditional funding for the USD 300 million Herat to Chaghcharan road project and the reconstruction of the airfield at Chaghcharan airport from senior UAE and Saudi officials in a meeting on the margins of the June 12 Paris Conference. The Gulf State ministers tentatively agreed to help fund these projects but requested a letter from the Afghan Minister of Finance stating that they are priorities for the GOA, feasibility studies for both projects, and a guarantee that, if funded, each project will be awarded through competitive bidding.

[1](#)3. (C) Also on the margins of the conference, Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Oh Joon expressed interest to GOL MFA U/S Talat-Kelpsa in funding the airfield reconstruction and said the GOK plans to spend USD 30 million over the next five years in Afghanistan. According MFA Development Counselor Tomas Irnius, who was also in Paris, the Koreans likewise requested a feasibility study for the airfield project.

[1](#)4. (C) Irnius said he expects U/S Talat-Kelpsa will combine his fact-finding trip to Ghor province with a trip to Kabul to meet with the GOA and discuss the three conditions the Gulf States laid down before they will fund the reconstruction projects. The fact-finding trip has been postponed twice, however, once due to overflight problems and once due to mechanical problems. Irnius said he suspects U/S Talat-Kelpsa will try to go to Afghanistan in the coming weeks.

[1](#)5. (C) Irnius told us that the GOL believes the GOA plans to award the airfield reconstruction project to a construction company on June 20, and only then will initiate a feasibility study and give it to the winning company. He also repeated the fears we've heard previously from the GOL that the GOA plans to resurface the airport runway to a thickness that would not support heavy military aircraft, such as C-130's (ref B). Irnius said it is U/S Talat-Kepsa's aim to halt any construction of the airfield until more money can be secured from either the UAE or the Koreans. With additional money, whoever actually paves the airfield can afford to do it to

such a thickness that it will support heavy aircraft.

16. (C) Comment: The Lithuanians expressed their gratitude to Administrator Fore for facilitating the four-way meeting between FM Vaitiekunas, the Gulf State representatives, and herself. One interlocutor told us he felt the meeting never would have taken place were it not for her presence. We agree and thank her for taking the time. We will continue to engage with the GOL to ensure it undertakes appropriate follow up actions.

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